

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 6 1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200 DALLAS, TX 75202-2733

February 13, 2012

Maria McGaha United States Forest Service Southwestern Region 333 Broadway SE Albuquerque, NM 87102

Dear Ms. McGaha:

In August 2010, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6 released the Grants Mining District Five-Year Plan. That document is a result of the collaboration of multiple federal agencies, including the United States Forest Service (USFS), state agencies, and Tribes to address contamination from the legacy uranium milling and mining that occurred in the Grants Mining District (GMD) in northwestern New Mexico. One of the main objectives and specific components included in the Plan is to assess and cleanup legacy uranium mines.

Located within the GMD are five (5) legacy uranium mines located on USFS lands: San Mateo, Taffy, Zia, La Jara, and Vallejo. The EPA is aware of the actions being conducted on the San Mateo uranium mine, as EPA concurred on the issuance of the Unilateral Administrative Order to the potentially responsible party compelling action. In email correspondence between myself and Mr. Steven McDonald, USFS On-Scene Coordinator, in November 2011, Mr. McDonald informed me that investigations were planned for the other four (4) uranium mines located on USFS lands.

Pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the EPA Region 6 and the USFS Southwestern Region (June 2011), response actions on these mine sites should be coordinated between our agencies. However, EPA is deferring the investigations to the USFS. Enclosed are Superfund Site Strategy Recommendations for each of the mines, summarizing information known to date about the mines and deferring the investigations of these four mines to USFS. As the investigations proceed, actions to address releases from the mine sites should be coordinated with EPA, pursuant to the MOU.

We look forward to working with USFS on the very important issue of legacy uranium mining.

Sincerely,

Lisa Marie Price

Grants Mining District Coordinator

EPA Region 6

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY REGION 8 1445-19058 AVENUE, BUITE 1200



Enclosure

cc: Steven McDonald, OSC USFS

Chris Petersen, EPA Dana Bahr, NMED John Pfeil, MMD

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